

SOIL EROSION AND CONSERVATION (2nd edn)) by R. P. C. Morgan, Longman Group, Harlow and J. Wiley & Sons, New York, 1995. No. of pages: x + 198. Price £17.99 (pb). ISBN 0-582-24492-7.

Soil erosion has become even more of a global issue than it was when the first edition of *Soil Erosion and Conservation* was published in 1986. With the globalization of the debate have also come significant changes of emphasis by both erosion researchers and conservation practitioners. Researchers' models have changed (though not the way they validate them) and practitioners now have far broader perspectives in seeking solutions to erosion. Along with the now-obligatory references to 'sustainability' has come an emphasis on erosional impacts on the productive potential of the land, not just the quantities of soil moving. In line with the increasing disenchantment at the failure of most soil conservation projects has come a reorientation towards biological and low-cost methods of erosion control, farming systems analysis and land husbandry in order to try to make the experts' recommendations more applicable at the field level. The integration of the diversity of socioeconomic factors with the more standard biophysical criteria has risen high on the priority lists of most persons working in the subject area. To a degree, this second edition reflects some of these changes.

Adopting an almost identical structure to the first edition, Roy Morgan considers the processes and mechanisms of erosion, the factors responsible and then a number of ways of measuring and assessing the erosion situation such as erosion hazard assessment, models and field measurements. Morgan's own knowledge of and contributions to the development of erosion models shines through as a highlight of the volume. He gives tabulated demonstration calculations of most of the important predictive models and presents the most recent advances in, for example, EUROSEM. A similar

review of the considerable advances made in erosion-productivity modelling would have added significantly to the value of this section, linking the models themselves more closely to their practical application in real life.

Erosion control and soil conservation rate only a little more than 40 per cent of the book – a pity given that many readers might be more interested in solutions than problems! The sections on strategies for erosion control, crop and vegetation management, soil management and mechanical methods of erosion control are little changed from 1986, presenting a fairly standard but well-balanced review of technical approaches to conservation. It is only in the concluding chapter, entitled a little confusingly 'Implementation', that new material on crucial topics such as legislation, institutions and policies appears.

*Soil Erosion and Conservation* in its tried and trusted format deservedly remains the standard text for many courses in agriculture, geography and environmental science departments. This reviewer felt just a little disappointed that the opportunity was not taken to turn the subject on its head – away from the notion that all erosion needs is a technical fix and towards the view that erosion is simply a manifestation of underdevelopment, poverty and other socioeconomically controlled problems. A reflection on the substantial advances made in recent years as exemplified in Australia's *Land Care* programme would not have been amiss. Nevertheless, most teachers and students will appreciate the systematic and familiar treatment of this most important topic. This new edition will retain its reputation for being a good, solid review of technical approaches to soil erosion and conservation.

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